

August 12, 2002

PROCEEDING: 98-67

RE: PETITION OF ULTRATEC, INC., TO RECOGNIZE CAPTEL AS AN ENHANCED VCO SERVICE IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICES

The FCC is commended for considering the petition of Ultratec, Inc., which asks that CapTel be recognized as an enhanced Voice Carryover (VCO) service in telecommunications relay services. I am submitting this request to the FCC as a president of and on behalf of the Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA), an organization for people who have become deaf during adolescence or adulthood.

One of the most frustrating situations that a deafened person has to face is telephone communications. As hearing people, we have enjoyed the free and easy exchange of conversations with our families, friends, employers, businesspersons and others. While we appreciate relay services by TTY or by use of voice carry-over (VCO), it is nowhere near equal access. Hearing people really dislike using the relay with us. Our families share with us their frustrations with operators. Our hearing friends often stop calling. Businesses frequently hang up on us. . Opportunities for employment or better paying jobs have been lost because of the awkwardness of relay calls. Irregardless of laws that protect our employment rights, jobs have been lost when deafened people cannot make quick and effective phone calls

CapTel combines VCO with Fastran (speech-to-text) and thus makes both sides of the conversation flow at a natural, real-time pace. CapTel has generated much excitement among members of both ALDA and anticipate the chance to be able to have smoother and freer telephone conversations. Hearing family members and friends with whom the possibility of CapTel has been discussed share our anticipation. With CapTel, I feel as if I will be in control of my side of the conversation as I used to be when I could hear and that the overall quality is superior to traditional relay, with or without VCO. CapTel will be more comfortable for hearing people and assist in keeping deafened people in contact with the people who are important in our lives.

Please give serious consideration to Ultratec's petition. Know that it has enthusiastic support from the Association of Late Deafened Adults.

Sincerely yours,

Edna Shipley-Conner
President, ALDA Inc.

14895 East 14th Street
Suite 200
San Leandro, CA 94578